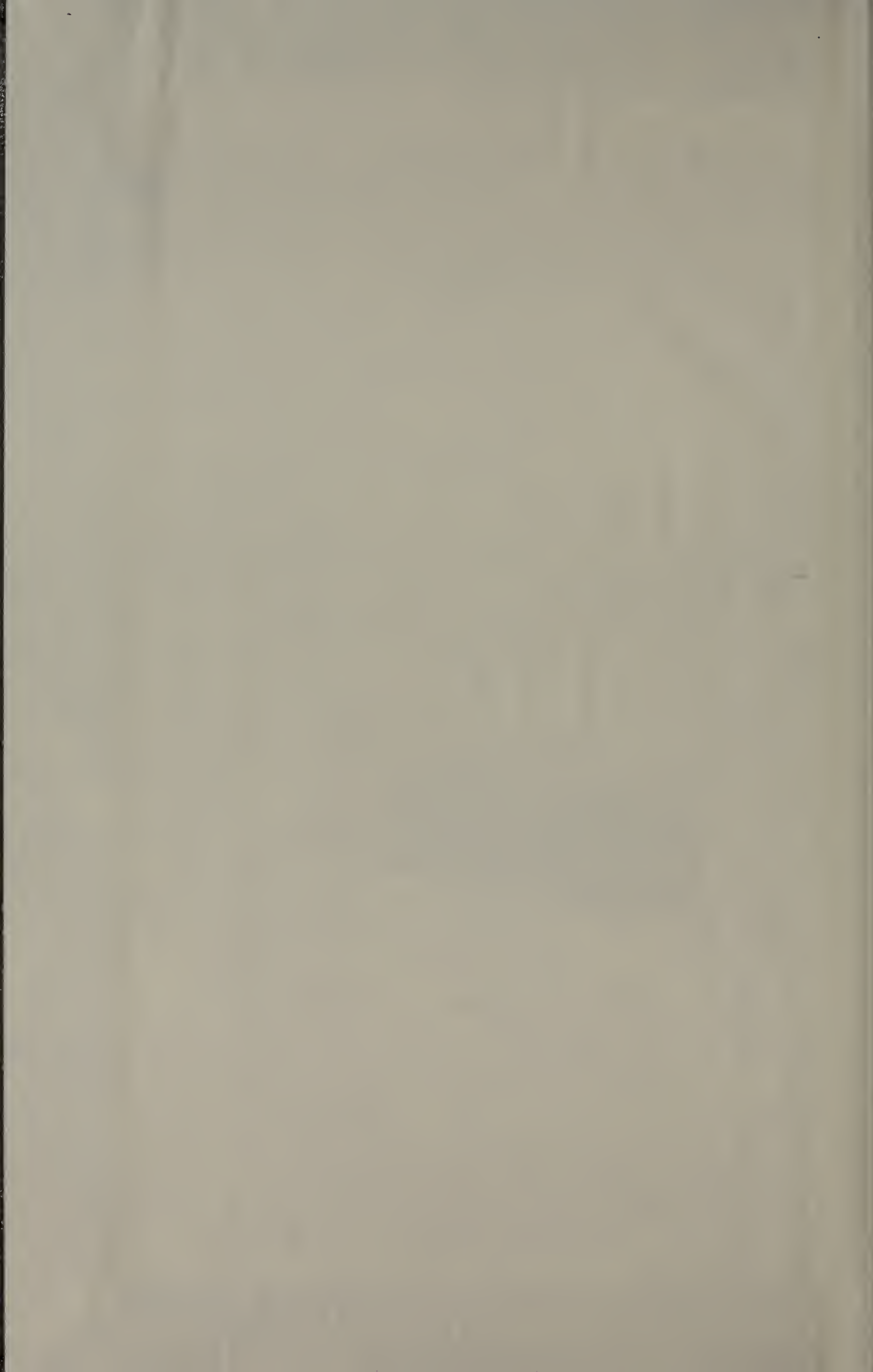
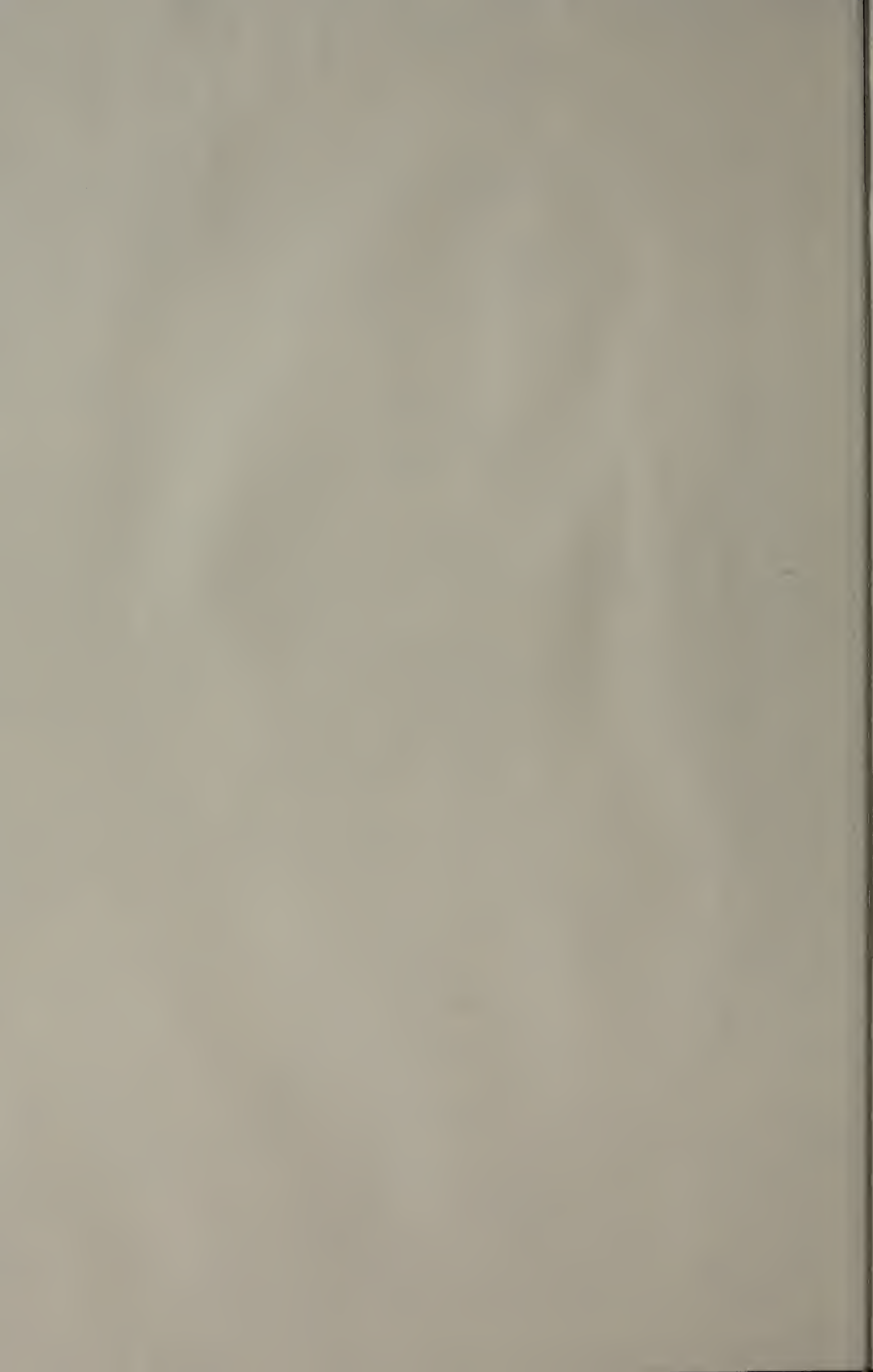




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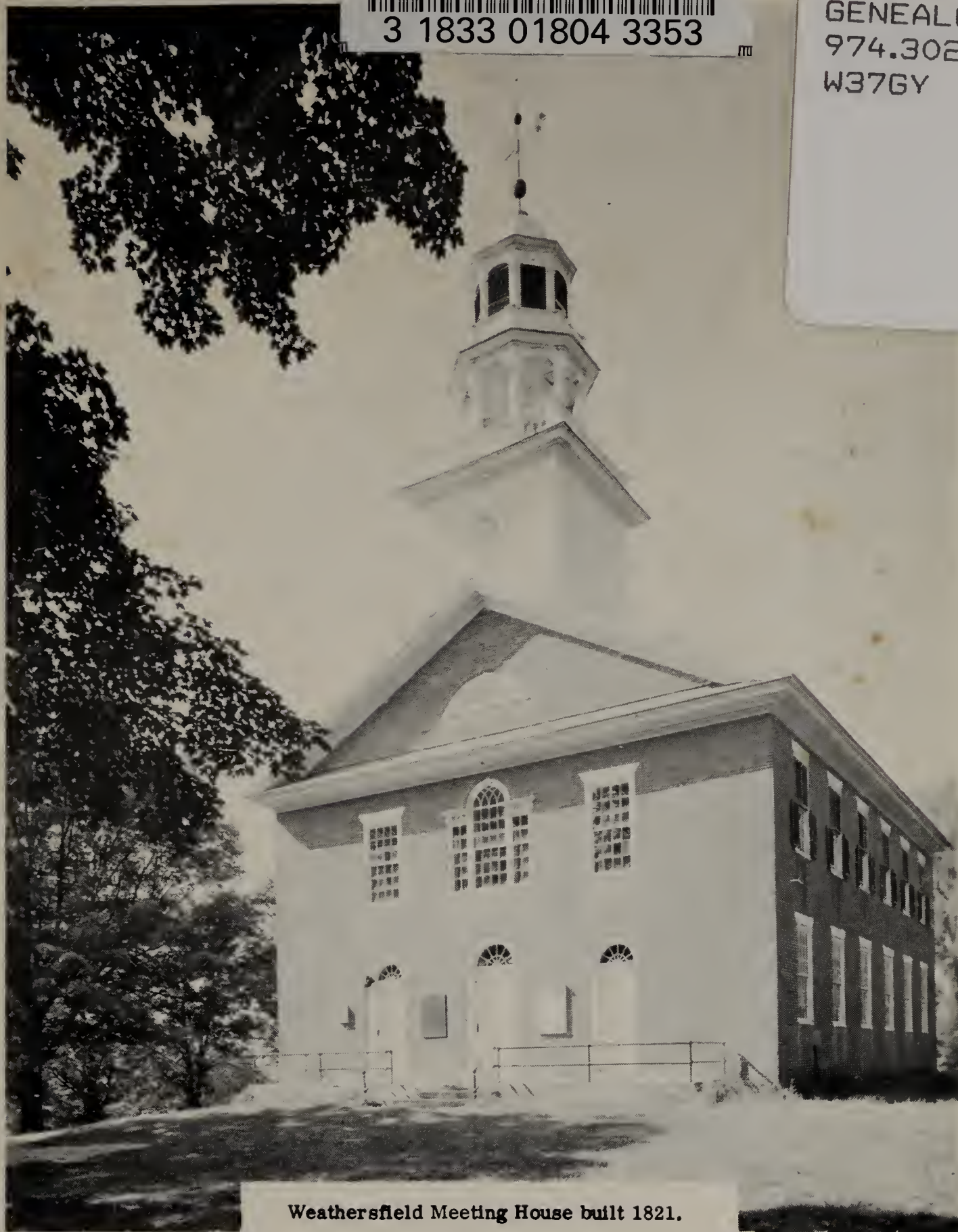
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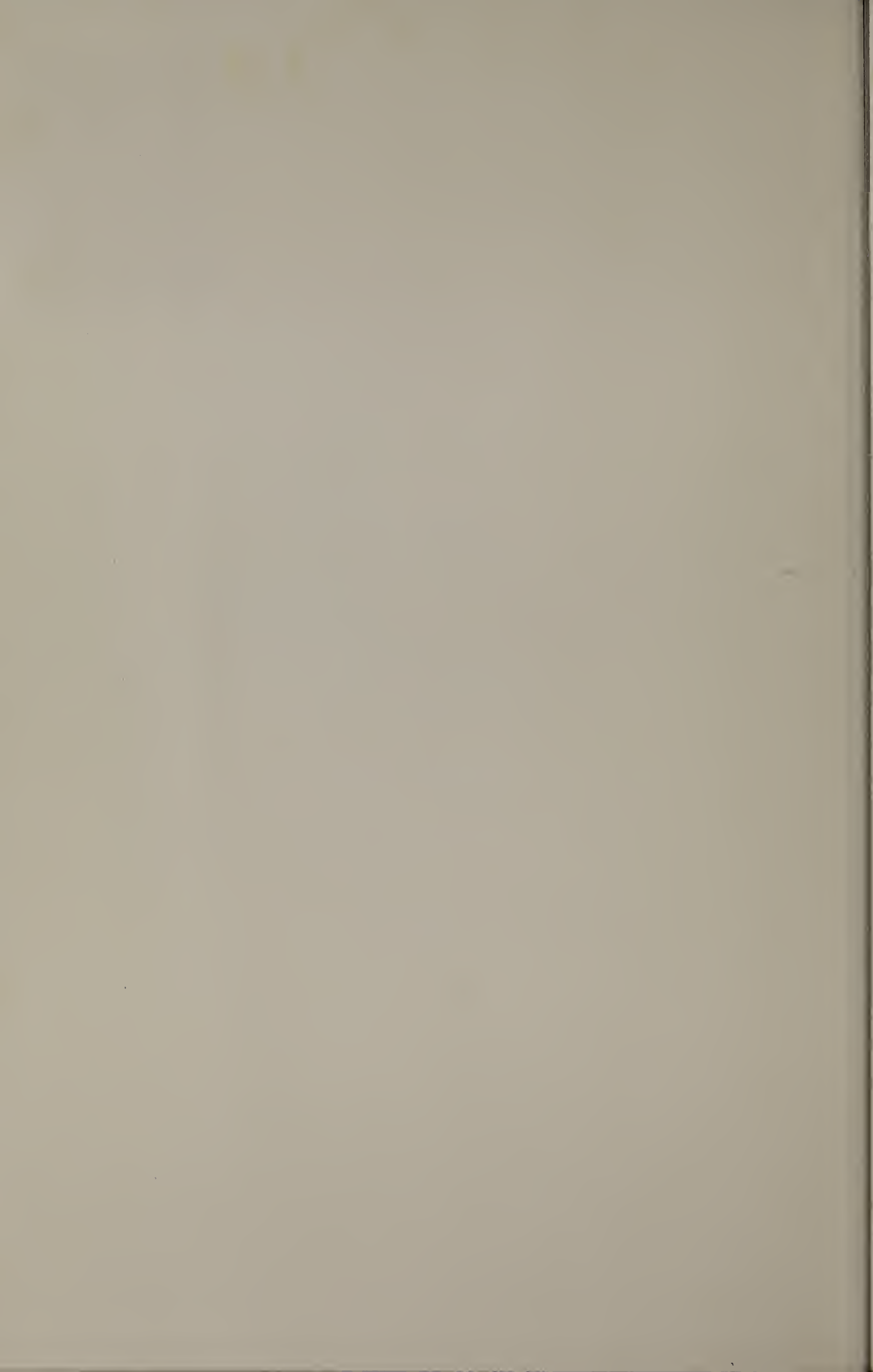
Weathersfield Meeting House built 1821.

GLIMPSES
OF
WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

1761 - 1961

by

Thelma Putnam Hoisington



**GLIMPSES
OF
WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

BI-CENTENNIAL

1761 – 1961**

Hurd's Offset Printing
Springfield, Vt.

Two hundred years ago this summer on August 20, 1761, Weathersfield, Vermont was granted a charter by King George III through Governor Benning Wentworth of New Hampshire, as were a lot of other towns along the Connecticut River in Vermont and New Hampshire, hence the reason for all of the Bi-Centennial celebrations this year.

Let us forget for a few minutes about our modern conveniences of home and transportation and picture what Weathersfield was like in 1761, 200 years ago. Old Ascutney Mountain was here looking down on the same rivers and streams, but on no roads. The land was mostly covered by forests. Along the Connecticut where now are large level meadows for raising corn and hay, there was a pine forest known as the "Pine Lands". Evidence of these huge pines can be seen near Weathersfield Bow in a stump fence along the old Ferry Road. On the higher levels of the town were forests of hardwood, hemlock and spruce.

There were Indian trails, however, which passed through the town, the best one being along the Connecticut River passing through the pine forest as it was clear of underbrush. Another Indian trail followed the general direction of the Black River but kept to higher levels. This one later became the Crown Point Military Road. General Jeffery Amherst, the British Military Commander in America, had captured Fort Ticonderoga from the French on July 26, 1759 and took Crown Point on August 4. Within a week he ordered a road cut to Fort No. 4 (Charlestown) for moving supplies from that fort and from the coastal towns.

This was the beginning of the famous Crown Point Road which passes through Weathersfield and which can still be traced easily some of the way. During 1959, the 200th anniversary of the building of this road, under the direction of Augustus Aldrich of Weathersfield Center, and sponsored by the Weathersfield Historical Society, the road was traced through the town, marked and partially surveyed.

Several groups of children, members of the Junior Historical Society of Weathersfield, followed the road under the leadership of Mrs. Agnes Torp of Kendricks Corners and Mr. Aldrich. History states that the Crown Point Road through our town was built by Col. John Goff and his regiment of 800 men under nine Captains. It passes through the land of the Crown Point Country Club, Augustus Aldrich, Wellwood Orchards, Thelma Hoisington, David Claghorn, R. D. Bullard, the Plain Cemetery, Stoughton Pond, C. A. Murray, Lawrence Moore and then over the hill to Cavendish. Granite roadside markers were placed many years ago by the D. A. R. These may be seen near Wellwood Orchards, R. D. Bullard's and near Amsden. When the Road was built, mileposts were set up at each mile. Only two of these original markers are known to exist today. They are common fieldstones and both are in Weathersfield near Amsden. One is marked 1759 10 M Camp and the other 1760 - 1759 Mile XI. Probably Augustus Aldrich is the best authority in the state on the Crown Point Road as he hiked over its entire length when he was a student at Vermont Academy during 1908 and 1909 and various sections of it in later years.

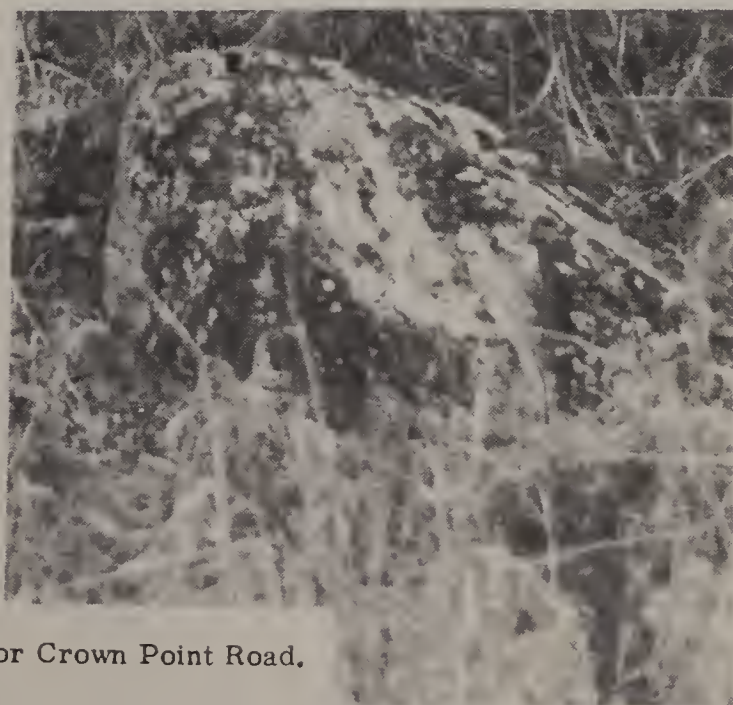
The Crown Point Road had its effect on the settlement of Weathersfield as the early settlers built their cabins near it. Nathaniel Stoughton came to Weathersfield in 1780 and built a log cabin near the Road which he occupied for eight years. He then built the house which was threatened to be demolished by the North Springfield Flood Control Dam Project. Through the efforts of the Stoughton descendants, the house was moved to a higher location. Captain William Upham came to Weathersfield in 1772 and located near the Crown Point Road on what is now Wellwood Orchards. Josiah Dartt was another. And there were many others. In 1755 Mrs. Submit Grout with three of her children were taken captive through this area. Her husband, Major Hilkiah Grout, followed with his rifle. She was later ransomed with two of her children and they settled at the Butterfield farm (later Claghorn) which she helped him to clear. The Grouts lived and died there and were buried



Green Mountain Range from Weathersfield Center.



Stoughton House built 1788 near Crown Point Road. Moved to higher ground because of North Springfield Dam. Site now covered by Stoughton Pond.



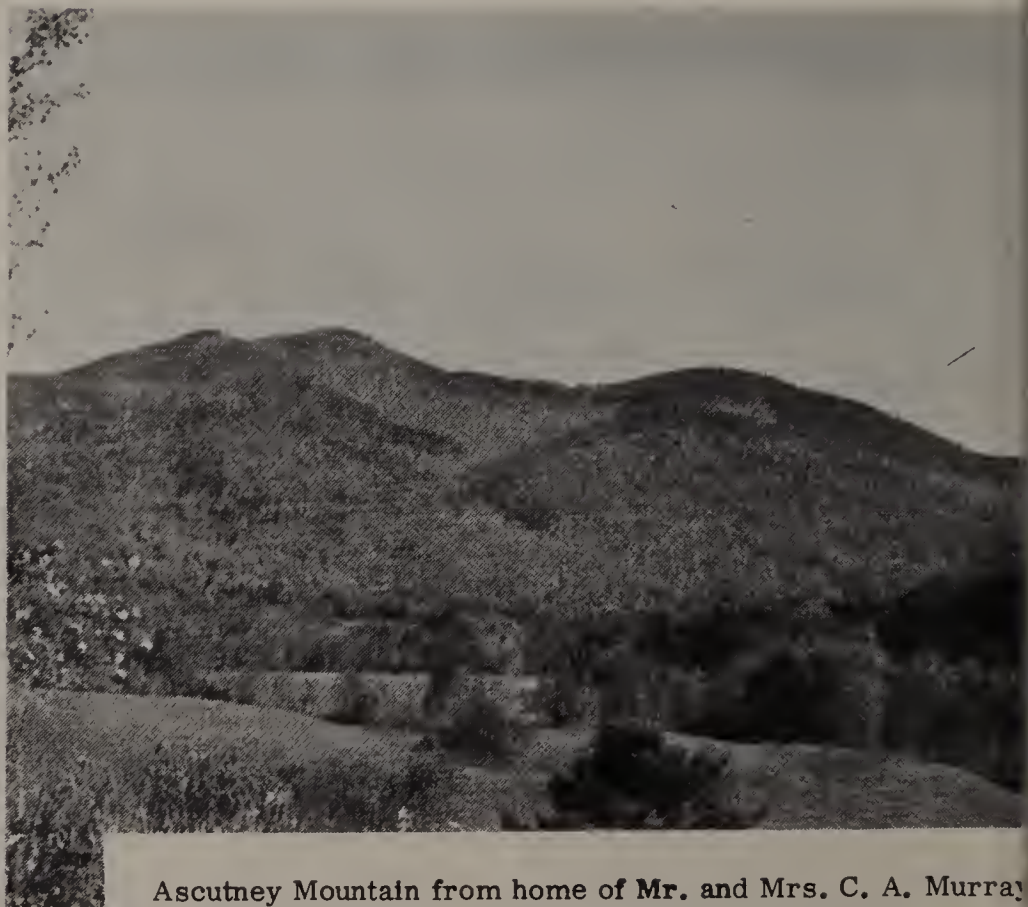
Original mileposts for Crown Point Road.



Rev. Dan Foster House - Home of Weathersfield Historical Soci



Ashley's Ferry which crossed the Connecticut River at the Bow.
(Looking toward New Hampshire)



Ascutney Mountain from home of Mr. and Mrs. C. A. Murray

in the Grout Cemetery on that farm. This cemetery was obliged to be moved by the Army Engineers in 1959 because of the North Springfield Dam Project, and much of the land cleared by the Grouts is now under water. The Grout children who returned from captivity were Asa, who lived on the Crown Point Road where the Grout Cellar Hole still remains, and Martha, who married Capt. John Marsh and lived in the Marsh District.

The Weathersfield Charter was granted in 1761 to 62 men of New Haven, Conn. They were called proprietors and formed a company but never settled here. They had the town surveyed and two or three rough roads cut, then encouraged young men to build houses here and a mill. Ascutney was one of the first settlements and was called Weathersfield Four Corners, later, Ascutneyville. Houses were built about this time at Weathersfield Bow, the Marsh District and the Center. First log cabins, then when the saw mills came, the log cabins were replaced by the frame houses.

The first church was built at Weathersfield Center where five roads came together. The church society was organized in 1775 and a wooden church built in 1786. This burned in 1821 when Rev. James (Priest) Converse was the pastor. The present large brick edifice, the First Congregational Church of Weathersfield, was built the same year with box pews, high pulpit, sounding board and balcony. This was the Meeting House for the entire town. However, in 1861, just 100 years ago, it was remodeled so as to make two floors with the church on the second floor and the Town Hall on the ground floor.

From 1832 to 1846 the other churches of the town were built. There were two churches in Perkinsville, Baptist and Methodist, but the latter finally gave up and the building is now used for the Hawks Mt. Grange Hall. The Baptist Church burned and the present one was built in 1932

which is called the Perkinsville Community Church. The Church at the Bow is the East Congregational Church of Weathersfield and the one at Ascutney is called the Ascutney Union Church.

As to the early pastors of the First Church at the Center, Rev. James Treadwell was the first from 1783 to 1787. The first settled pastor was the Rev. Dan Foster who lived in the house now owned by the Weathersfield Historical Society and for whom the house was named. He served the church from 1789 to 1793. In 1801, Rev. James Converse came to the church from Rindge, N.H. and served as pastor until his death in 1839, a very successful pastorate. He built most of the house where the Misses Margaret and Mary Peirce, his great granddaughters, now live. He was familiarly called Priest Converse and was a farmer as well as a minister. He brought the first blooded stock to Weathersfield and established the first apple orchard. He had a great influence in the town regarding family ideals of the value of education, which influence has continued to be felt for many generations.

Weathersfield has taken her part in the wars. The Crown Point Road passed through the town. Crown Point was a British fort. Weathersfield was the most northerly settlement at the time when trouble was brewing with King George in 1775. Due to this strategic position of the town, a committee of safety was formed to take charge of all preparations. Israel Burlingame of Ascutneyville, Benoni Tuttle at the Bow, Hilkiah Grout at Perkinsville and William Upham and Eliphalet Spofford at the Center formed this committee and it was voted that William Upham should keep a magazine of military provisions on the west side of the town and Israel Burlingame on the east.

At the time of the Civil War, the population had increased and according to the names on the Soldiers Memorial Monument at Weathersfield Center, 136 men volunteered and served. This was the greatest number per capita of any town in Vermont. Of these 136 men,



Panorama from Meeting House Steeple. Ascutney Mountain at right. Little Ascutney at center. Hawks Mountain at far left.



Downer's Hotel - Famous as summer resort and for its dances.



Ferry at Ascutney used after the old toll bridge was carried away by the ice jam until present steel bridge was built



Plains District School House.



Hawks Mountain House of Perkinsville. (Destroyed by fire)



The Plain Cemetery.

6 were killed in battle, 4 were wounded and died, 2 died of starvation in prison, 13 died in service and 4 died of disease contracted in service. We are told that the "Underground Railroad" operated through Perkinsville with special hiding places for negroes who were escaping to Canada. One of these hide outs was at Judge Pingree's office which stood between the Sparhawk (Mrs. Amsden) house and the Balargeon house.

In all wars since that time, Weathersfield men have always responded to the call of duty. According to the Town Report of February 1, 1945, 101 men and five women served in World War II. Two of these, Irving Bliss and Arnold Oja, made the Supreme Sacrifice. There were also those who served in the Korean War. It is unfortunate that further statistics are not readily available.

In 1775 there was a population of about 100 people in 20 families, but 16 years later, there were 207 families and about 1100 people. The first houses were simple log cabins but as mills were built, the large trees were cut and sawed into lumber from which frame houses were built. As the land was cleared of trees it was also cleared of large stones. Evidence of this can be seen today in the long straight stone walls which serve as boundaries of farms and fields. In the winter, when the trees are bare, these long, straight stone walls can be seen through heavily wooded areas which probably were cleared by these industrious pioneers.

In those days, the disposal of the wood was a problem. They could not use it all for firewood and building. Many logs were used in road building, for the so-called corduroy roads through swamps. These logs are still in good condition today but are being covered by gravel and finally with the hard surface in modern road construction. Some of the timber of those early days was burned. Potash, made from the ashes, and charcoal were shipped to Boston and other places and traded for molasses, sugar and other necessities. Thus large amounts of timber were consumed in this way, as the land was cleared.

As the population of Weathersfield increased, schools were built and the town was divided into 13 school districts:

- | | |
|--------|----------------------------|
| No. 1 | Perkinsville |
| No. 2 | Upham |
| No. 3 | Camp Hill |
| No. 4 | Weathersfield Bow |
| No. 5 | Goulden Ridge (Litchfield) |
| No. 6 | Weathersfield Center |
| No. 7 | Plains |
| No. 8 | Amsden |
| No. 9 | Marsh |
| No. 10 | Ascutneyville |
| No. 11 | Stockin (Greenbush) |
| No. 12 | Limekiln |
| No. 13 | Kendricks Corners |

There are schools now in only four of these districts as Perkinsville and Ascutney Schools have been enlarged and the children are transported to them and to the Marsh and Amsden schools where necessary. A new two room building was erected in Perkinsville in 1955 on the school property and the old one is still used, making four rooms there. The Upham schoolhouse was condemned, closed and sold to Wellwood Orchards. The Camp Hill schoolhouse was closed years ago. It still stands across the road from the Joseph Daniels home. The Bow school was closed and the children are transported by bus to Ascutney. The building is now used for the Weathersfield Bow Community Club. The Litchfield school was closed years ago and is now used as a camp by Everett Stevens. It is opposite the home of Herbert Johnson. The Center schoolhouse burned in 1926 and a new one was built in 1927. This was closed in 1947 and the children transported to the Marsh District. The building was purchased by Norman Hudson and it is now an attractive little summer home. The Plains schoolhouse, made of brick, was abandoned years ago and nothing remains of it. The Amsden schoolhouse, built by Charles Amsden when his lime business was flourishing, is still used. It is a one-room building and has been improved with an



**Home of Luther P. Warren, owned later by Mr. and Mrs. Warren Child.
Demolished because of North Springfield Flood Control Dam.**



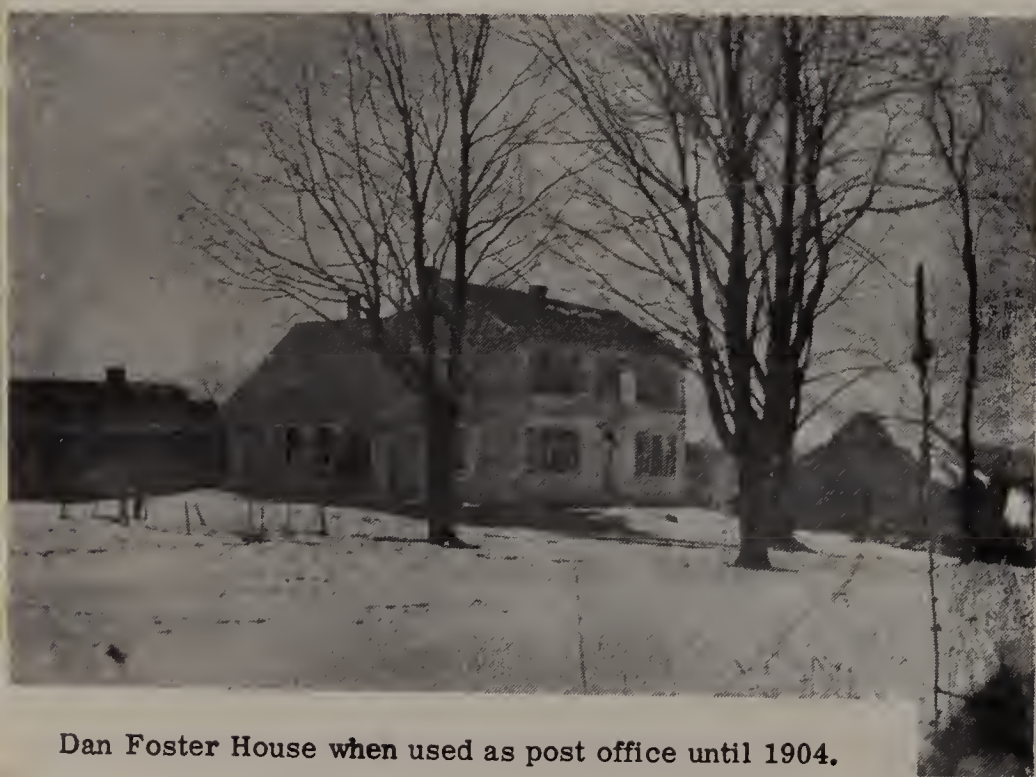
Sheep-Shearing Time - F. Eugene Putnam, Fred H. Nichols and Fred A. Putnam.



Ascutney Mountain.



The Rev. Dan Foster House.



Dan Foster House when used as post office until 1904.



Soldiers' Memorial Monument and Grove in front of Weathersfield Meeting House.

addition for a kitchen and toilets. The Marsh School burned about 1916 or 1917. A new one was built at a different location so as to accommodate children from the Limekiln District which was closed. This is still used and has kitchen, toilets and furnace. The Ascutney schoolhouse was in bad condition and not large enough. This was sold and a new three room building was erected on a new site. The Stockin schoolhouse was sold and dismantled. The Limekiln schoolhouse has been made into a small summer home. The Kendricks Corners schoolhouse was moved and made into a house and is now occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Everett Bryant.

Teachers as well as preachers left their mark on the life of the community. Jeremiah Bemis was one of these. He lived on a farm at the foot of Camp Hill and taught at the Center School. His ideas of school and family government were of the old Puritan stamp. Obedience was asked and obedience was secured, with no compromise with what he believed to be right. He deplored the lack of text books for the common schools of that day so he wrote his own book on Mathematics. It was all hand written but contained plenty of hard work in Algebra, Geometry, Trigonometry and some Surveying. This book was on exhibition at a Weathersfield Center Pilgrimage Service many years ago when Harold Bemis Converse was one of the speakers. Another outstanding teacher in the same category was Justus Dartt, a very stern man. Instead of remaining in the common school, he rose to the office of State Superintendent of Schools. Mrs. Kate Rice was a later one. At various times the older, man-grown boys were serious disciplinary problems, but Kate Rice always seemed to handle them successfully.

Before the Rural Free Delivery of mail came to Weathersfield, there were five Post Offices. They were located at the Bow, Ascutney, Amsden, Perkinsville and the Center. At an early date there was a Post Office at Greenbush. This was moved to the Upper Falls, then to Downer's, and finally to Amsden. The mail was brought

to these places by stage from other Post Offices. Elias Chamberlain, who lived at the Center went to Perkinsville each afternoon to take out-going mail and bring back the mail for the Center people to what is now the Rev. Dan Foster House. When he arrived, the contents of the mail bag was dumped on the kitchen table and sorted by Mr. and Mrs. Henry Goldsmith who were Post Master and Post Mistress. The Center school children were dismissed from school at four o'clock and would wait for the mail which came about five. They would stand around the table until it was sorted and placed in the boxes. Then they would take the family mail and trudge home.

In the very early days of Weathersfield there were many inns, but later the principle ones were the Hawks Mountain House at Perkinsville and Downer's Hotel near Amsden. The latter was famous for years as a summer resort and for dances and turkey suppers. People came from miles around to the dances at Downer's.

Like many other Vermont towns, Weathersfield has had many covered bridges. Now, there are only two left on the highways, the Upper Falls bridge and a small one on the road leading to the farm of Gerald McAllister in Ascutney. There was one at the north end of Perkinsville, replaced by the present cement bridge when the road was relocated. There were four near Perkinsville which had to be removed because of the North Springfield Flood Control Dam. These were the Pike Bridge at Lower Perkinsville, the Salmond or Salter Bridge across the Branch Brook, the Stoughton Bridge, also across the Branch Brook and the Butterfield or Claghorn Bridge. The Stoughton Bridge was moved to the property of Andrew Titcomb in Perkinsville and the Salmond Bridge was moved to Amsden where it is used to house town machinery. The other two which were longer were sold by the town to contractors. There was one just south of Ascutney village which was removed as the road was improved and replaced by a cement bridge. Then there was the Blood Bridge just north of the Bow. Here the road was relocated as it was

improved. Also, when Charles Amsden was operating his lime business at Amsden, he built a covered bridge across the Black River above the present Upper Falls Bridge. So, as the roads are improved and other changes made in the name of "progress", the old covered bridges disappear.

There are 13 known cemeteries in Weathersfield and no doubt other spots where a few people, mostly children, were buried hurriedly when there was a severe epidemic. The Ascutneyville Cemetery is at Ascutney, also a small old one, the Richards, near the home of Mr. and Mrs. Alan McVeigh on the bank of the Connecticut River. The Bow Cemetery is just off Route 5. Opposite that and a little below is the old Hubbard Cemetery. The Deane Cemetery is small and north of the Bow on Route 5. The Tuttle Cemetery is another small one and lies nearly opposite the falls on Route 5 north of the Bow. The old Tolles Cemetery is on the hill east of the Center. A sign has been placed by the Goulden Ridge road recently by the Precision Valley 4-H Club of North Springfield to mark where there was once a road leading to it. The Club also cleaned the grounds under the direction of their leader Mrs. James Ward. The old Upham Cemetery is on the Center-Springfield road just south of Augustus Aldrich's home. The Weatherbee Cemetery is on a hill in the Marsh District surrounded by a pasture owned by Josiah Curtis. The Eddy Cemetery is near Greenbush, a short distance from Route 106. The Greenbush Cemetery is right beside the road on Route 106. This year the 4-H Clubs of Greenbush have improved this Cemetery with the help of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Smith and Mr. Edward Williams. The Plain Cemetery and the old Town Cemetery adjacent to it are on a side road near the new Stoughton Pond. Also adjacent to those is the recently relocated Grout Cemetery. This was in the area to be flooded by the North Springfield Dam. The Army Engineers purchased an acre of land from David Green and moved the remains and monuments to this location in 1959. It is surrounded by a nice stone wall and a bronze marker was placed at the entrance.

The North Springfield Flood Control Dam has been mentioned several times. The Army Engineers came to Weathersfield and Springfield in 1955 and held meetings of the interested townspeople. The overall objective of all dams being built along the Connecticut River Watershed is to prevent serious floods in lower lands of Massachusetts and Connecticut along the river. But owners of the Springfield Machine shops could see that they would be protected from floods also and would gain much. However, Weathersfield has suffered because 1200 acres or more of good farm land has been taken for the reservoir basin above the dam. Aside from the loss of the land, valuable and historic houses have been demolished, and, most important of all, many people moved away. The four covered bridges were moved and roads had to be abandoned. The Army Engineers built a road on the east side of the Black River to replace roads abandoned on the west side of the river. However, credit should be given for the new Stoughton Pond which came as a result of a small dam across the Branch Brook with the road passing over the top of it. It really is a beautiful spot and many people use it for fishing and swimming. The big dam was dedicated in 1960.

As to the early industry of Weathersfield, the Potash and Charcoal, previously mentioned, was a by-product of the clearing of the land in order to dispose of the trees. Then came the saw mills for sawing the lumber and shingles for building the houses. And from the Windsor County Gazeteer and Directory published in 1883 and 1884 we get the following list of industries:

J. A. Call's cotton mill, at Perkinsville, came into his possession in 1873. It had 82 looms, employed 30, and turned out 1,500,000 yards of cloth per annum.

The saw and grist-mill, wooden ware and carriage factory of M.G. Robinson, at Perkinsville, erected in 1883, employed 30, and used 500,000 feet of lumber annually.

The Windsor County Soapstone Company's quarries, located on the Quarry Road were opened by J. M. Billings about 1850. At that time these were said to be among the best in the country and turned out about 1000 tons of soapstone per year. This business was developed later by the Hicks family with a mill beside the Black River in Perkinsville. Their products were soapstone sinks, stoves of various shapes and sizes, fireplace slabs, hearth stones, slabs for door steps and walks, set tubs, cisterns, griddles and other small items. It was really a unique business. The shop was taken by the Army Engineers because of the North Springfield Dam.

William C. Cram's carriage shop, at Perkinsville, was established in 1857 and manufactured about 30 carriages and sleighs per year.

The saw, grist and shingle-mill of Charles Amsden, located at Amsden were rebuilt by him in 1871. He manufactured 150,000 feet of lumber and 100,000 shingles per year. He did custom grinding and ground a large amount of western corn. Aside from this he developed the lime business, and, as he employed more men, he built about 20 houses including the store, school and a chapel. Today the store and school are still used as such but the chapel is used as a dwelling house. Thus the village was named Amsden. He built two stone kilns for burning the lime rock which was quarried nearby. These were below and beside the present road in Amsden (Route 131). Mr. Amsden owned 1000 acres of land on the north side of Hawks Mountain. On this land he had wood cut for the burning of the lime rock, from which process the product was quick lime for making plaster and mortar. He shipped 10,000 300-pound barrels of this quick lime annually to Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York and Vermont. After his death in 1900, the business declined. However, in the 1920's, A. W. LaFountain of Springfield bought the business and revived it for a few years. He built two steel kilns and a plant for hydrating the quick lime. This hydrated lime would keep indefinitely while the quick lime would become

airslacked after a time and would be worthless for making plaster. But the business is gone now, due mostly to the use of other materials for the inside walls of houses.

Oscar Streeter's butter tub factory, near Greenbush, was established by him in 1882. He made butter tubs and did a general wheel-wright and repair business.

John P. Knight's cider mill, near Amsden, turned out 900 barrels of cider and 1000 pounds of jelly per year.

George R. Sherman's butter tub factory and general repair shop, located on the present Route 131, made butter tubs, sap buckets, sap holders and did a general repair business. He also had a cider mill and turned out 700 barrels of cider per year.

Hicks Bros. had a wooden ware shop and made all kinds of wooden ware.

Aldrich and Crockett at the Center made cider and apple jelly.

L. H. Bailey's grist mill at Ascutneyville did custom grinding.

Also in Perkinsville, a Mr. Perkins from Boston built a large mill for the manufacture of cassimeres and satinets in 1835. This was a brick building four stories high. It had eight full sets of machinery, moved by a water wheel 19 feet in diameter and 26 feet long. When in full operation, it employed 150 people and manufactured 750 yards of cloth per day. But in 1839, the whole thing was destroyed by fire.

There were other small industries including several blacksmith shops, hat shops and tanneries.

But, everything considered, farming was the largest business. Most farmers had only eight or ten cows and made butter, but raised sheep in large numbers up to 300.

Most noted in the sheep industry was Consul William Jarvis who imported the Merino Sheep in large numbers from Spain and Portugal to his large farm at Weathersfield Bow. Today, there are only a few sheep in town but several large herds of cattle, the largest being that of Everett Stevens at the Bow. There are also three large poultry farms, those of Karl Stevens, Philip Jarvis and Everett Smith. Also, Wellwood Orchards is situated where Capt. William Upham settled in pioneer days.

The business of farming has changed drastically during the last 50 years. In the old days, labor was cheap and all farm work was done by hand, grass mowed with a scythe, raked by hand with a bull rake, pitched into hay cocks and then onto the cart and hauled to the barn by oxen or horses, then pitched off by hand and mowed away. Now, a farmer has a large investment in modern machinery and does specialized farming on a large scale. He has a larger number of cows, ships milk from his bulk storage tank via tank truck, and must keep his bacteria count down to the specifications of the Massachusetts Board of Health. This means much equipment and machinery. Milking is done by machine, milk is cooled by electricity. In some places it is piped directly from the cow to the bulk cooling tank. Tractors instead of horses pull the plows, harrows, and other land tilling machinery. Grass is cut with a tractor mower or a field chopper. Some is dried and baled in the field. Some is chopped and put in the silo for grass silage. All this is a far cry from the methods of the 1800's.

So, in the past 200 years, great changes have been made in Weathersfield. It is still a rural town. There are fewer farms being operated than in the 1800's and they are larger. There are many homes of people who work in nearby towns. Many women work as well as men. In Ascutney, there is an outdoor theatre, a good motel, The Ascutney Forge and Interior Decorating Studio, a coin operated laundry, restaurant, Proctor library, filling stations and garage, boat sales room, automobile sales room, store and three antique shops. Also, near Ascutney is a

large electric sub-station where electric power is brought in from the St. Lawrence Seaway and connected with the Central Vermont Power lines. And this year there is to be constructed near it a gas turbine generating plant, costing over \$1,000,000. All this increases the grand list and decreases the tax rate.

In Perkinsville, there is a garage, a store and a small gift shop. The Town Office is located in Perkinsville, a nice little building with a good vault, a safe, toilet, and furnace. One corner of the building is used for a branch of the Proctor Library. Most of the men and some women of Perkinsville are employed in Springfield.

Quite a number of places in Weathersfield have been bought for summer residences and future retirement homes. This is not surprising as it is one of the most scenic towns in Vermont. Ascutney Mountain rises at the north side of the town and offers a nice view from places along all of the many roads. This alone is an attraction to out of state people. Then to the west from the Center, there are beautiful views of the Green Mountain Range. And from the east side of the Center hill, the New Hampshire mountains can be seen, also the Connecticut River.

Weathersfield is becoming more accessible by automobile to people of southern New England because the Interstate Route 91, or super highway, is on its way here. It will be easier also for local residents to reach southern New England and points beyond.

We are celebrating our 200th anniversary on August 12 and 13 at the Center this year, 1961. As we do so, we hope and pray that Weathersfield may have a brilliant and prosperous future during the next 100 years.



Amsden Store - Residence of Charles Amsden above store.



Air view of Wellwood Orchards today where Capt. William Upham first settled on Crown Point Road.



First Congregational Church of Weathersfield (built 1821)



Perkinsville Community Church

And the following song closes the Program of the Bi-Centennial Celebration on August 12, to the tune of "God Bless America":

God bless old Weathersfield
Town that we love
Stand beside her, and guide her
Through the night with a light from above;
From old Ascutney, through the Center,
To the valleys, where we roam;
God bless old Weathersfield,
Our Home Sweet Home.

S P O N S O R S

Tyler Barton, Barton's Garage

Bellows Falls Cooperative Creamery

Robert Brogdale, Wellwood Orchards

Warren Child, Vermont Homecraft

Richard Conner,
Perkinsville Service Corp.

Donald G. Davidson, Nationwide Insurance

William Fellows

James Graham, Auctioneer

Walter J. Grimm

Mr. and Mrs. Leroy Guyette,
Amsden Store

Robert Harrington

Irene P. Hoyt, Town Representative

Clarence Martin, Martin Motor Co.

Allen Miller,
Millers' Heating and Plumbing - Greenbush

Edward Miller

Lawrence Moore,
Cockshutt Farm Machinery - Greenbush

Margaret Peirce, Handicraft Shop

Parker Risley

Richard Stover

Andrew Titcomb, Architect

Weathersfield Historical Society

Gilbert Whittemore,
Perkinsville General Store

John D. Wright, Attorney



Ascotney Union Church (built 1846).



East Congregational Church at Weathersfield Bow (built in 1838).



Butterfield Bridge (Claghorn). Removed because of North Springfield Dam. (South side and east entrance)



Butterfield or Claghorn Bridge.



Toll Bridge across Connecticut River at Ascutneyville, carried away by ice jam. Replaced by present steel bridge.

MEETING HOUSE ON THE HILL

1761 - 1961

By

John L. Hurd
Perkinsville, Vermont
August, 1961

Two hundred years is a long, long time,
In the memory of Man.
But it's only a single heart beat,
As part of the Master Plan.

So Weathersfield is growing old,
As history is read.
And yet it looks with youthful eyes,
To the centuries ahead.

The men who settled Weathersfield,
Were craftsmen, men with pride,
With axes on their shoulders,
And a musket by their side.

They came here, not as fugitives,
Nor wore a felons brand.
They wanted only a freeman's rights,
And the ownership of land.

They settled here, no wild frontier,
Where a man lives by the gun.
They settled down to build a town,
And they knew how a town was run.

They brought their wives and children,
Along the Indian track.
They carried their whole world with them,
They were never going back.

They cleared the fields and planted crops,
Where none had grown before,
They planted a rose bush in the yard,
And a lilac by the door.

They established a Freeman's Meeting.
They built a church and schools.
The laws they made were simple laws,
For they lived by simple rules.

Their mill dams tamed the rivers,
And their covered bridges stood
Foursquare, as did their houses,
Classic monuments of wood.

They worked and saved, and no man slaved
For another against his will.
And they lived their lives by the rules they made
In the meeting house on the hill.

And so the fruitful years went by,
And the old men passed away.
But young men stood in the meeting house,
And asked to have their say.

Then a message came which brought an end
To a peaceful hundred years.
It was Abraham Lincoln's anguished call
For Northern volunteers.

The brave young men of Weathersfield
Who answered Lincoln's call,
Went out to fight and sweat and starve,
And some of them gave their all.

And some returned as heroes,
Far fewer than those who went.
Some left their bones on Rebel soil,
Their names on a monument.

Again and again, when duty called,
As they had done before,
Young men left home to fight and die
In a world gone mad with war.

Pike Bridge at Lower Perkinsville. (South entrance) Removed because of the North Springfield Dam.



Salmond Bridge.



Interior of Pike Bridge looking north. (Lower Perkinsville)



Butterfield Bridge (Claghorn).
east entrance)



Old covered bridge at north end of Perkinsville. Replaced by present cement bridge.



West side of Pike Bridge (lower Perkinsville)

They fell in the Argonne, St. Mihiel,
On New Guinea, Tarawa,
On Guadalcanal, and the blood-stained hell
Of a beach called Omaha.

And each time, at the end of war,
Young men came back to find
A changing world, and a world of change
In the town they left behind.

With industry gone from the valleys,
And the sheep long gone from the hills,
Our men now work in other towns,
In factories, shops and mills.

But still we live in Weathersfield,
Our heritage with us still,
And live our lives by the rules we make
In the meeting house on the hill.

And where do we stand in Weathersfield,
As another century dawns,
With Dictators at the chess board,
And common men as pawns?

And how do we look to the future?
Do we view with fear and dread,
The threats of strife and nuclear war,
In the years which lie ahead?

Or do we look with hope and faith,
As we have since the town began,
With our heritage our guide, in times
That try the souls of men?

What is this heritage of ours,
To which we point with pride?
Is it faded ink in musty books,
Or gravestones, side by side?

Is it folklore, superstition,
Is it archaic laws that bind
Our present days and present ways
To the ways we left behind?

Our heritage is a living thing,
From the best of an honored past.
It's the sum of a lot of little things,
Important things which last.

It's the courage of a hardy band,
Whose signatures defied
The vested rights of a British king.
Who won those rights, or died.

It's the faith of a lonely woman,
Toil-worn, sick, and poor,
Who planted a rose bush in the yard,
And a lilac by the door.

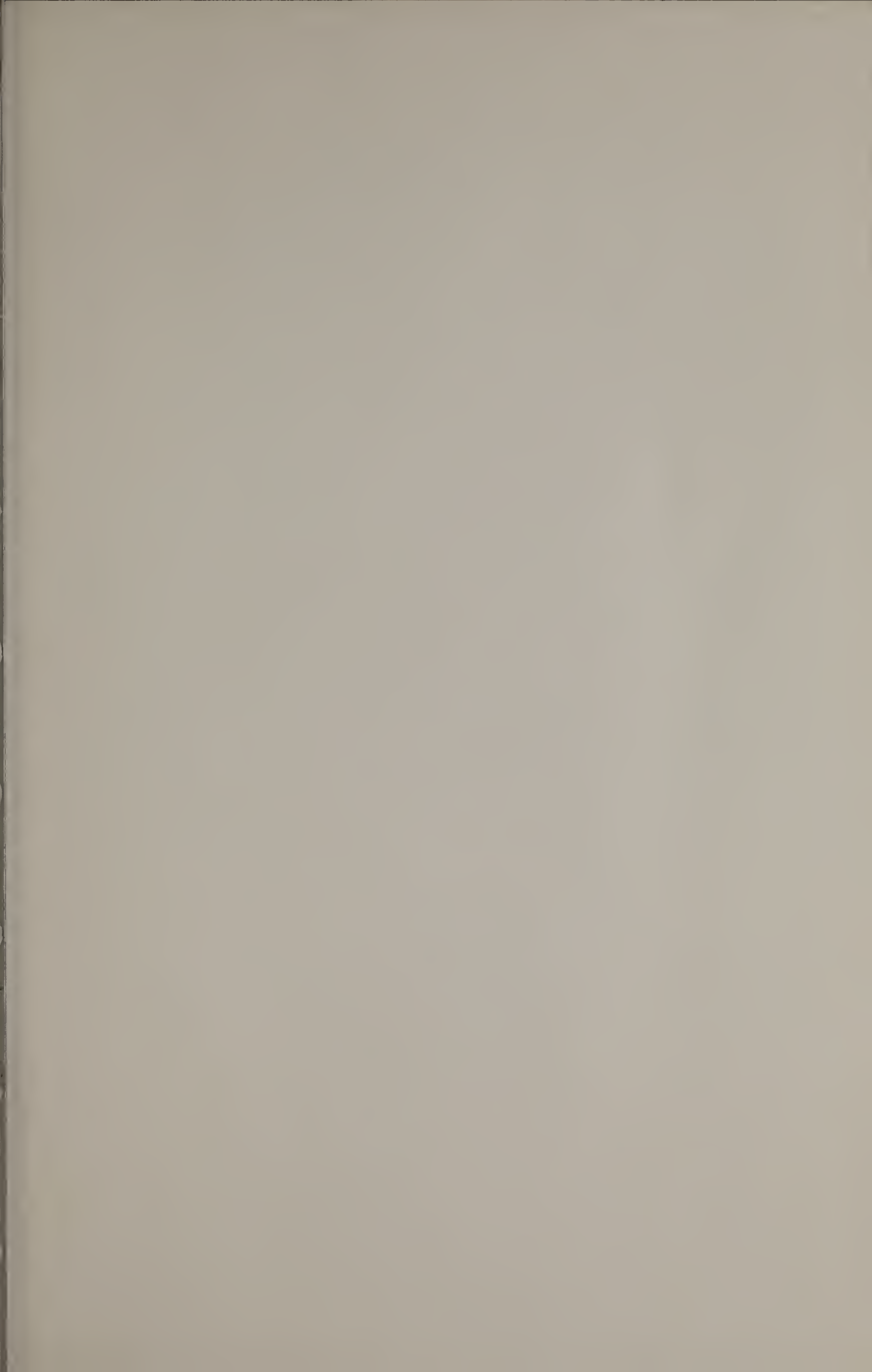
It's the duty of a man to honor his word,
The duty to pay his bill,
The duty to live by the rules that are made
In the meeting house on the hill.

It's the holy right of a free born man
To walk his acres, free
Of fear and want and prejudice,
In peace and dignity.

Is it enough, this heritage,
To live by, here today?
Pray to your God that it is, and count
Your blessings as you pray.

For if we fail, we're failing not
For only now, and here,
But for all of our tomorrows,
And all of yesteryear.

But if we fail, and a tyrant rules
That the freeman's voice be still,
Let freedom make its final stand,
In this meeting house on the hill.









Stoughton Pond



